RAISING CHILDREN IN ISLAM

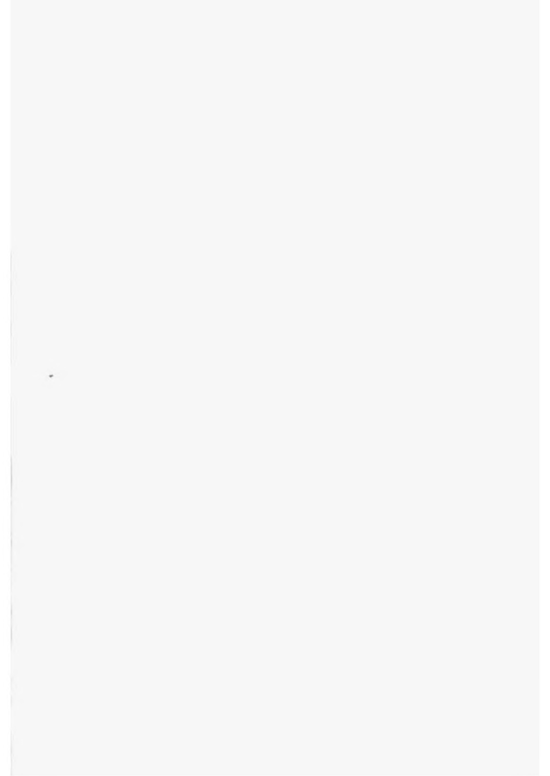
Muhammad Nur ibn `Abd al-Hafizh Suwayd



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Implanting the Creed





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①

Implanting the Creed

البناء العقدي

Muhammad Nur Suwayd

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Contents



Preface

The Muslim's attachment to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the strongest among all human relations. Also, he feels that he loves the Prophet (peace be upon him) more than himself and all mankind. Moreover, Almighty Allah states in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is closer to the believers than themselves.

This deep attachment to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is instilled into the hearts and minds of Muslim children at a very young age. He (peace be upon him) is the ideal that every Muslim follows and the source of the great *Shari`ah* that the true Muslim adheres to. He (peace be upon him) exemplified all that brings us close to Allah or enhances our life. He thoroughly guided us to the extent that greatly surprised the Jews who said that our Prophet has taught us everything.

In this rapidly developing world, Muslim children are faced with enormous challenges in a largely

secular environment, and parents are in urgent need of returning to the pure Islamic system.

In light of the recent Islamic awakening in all fields, we realize that it is helpful to draw attention to this integrated Prophetic methodology which Muslims should adhere to in raising the generation of the desired awakening that will shoulder the responsibility of bringing about an Islamic renaissance.

The author of this precious book exerted great efforts in clarifying the bases of the Prophetic methodology in raising children and how the Prophet (peace be upon him) guided Muslims to take care of children regarding their creed, acts of worship, physical construction, hygienic constitution and many other aspects. Consequently, the Muslim child will grow into an integrated man that is beneficial to his community.

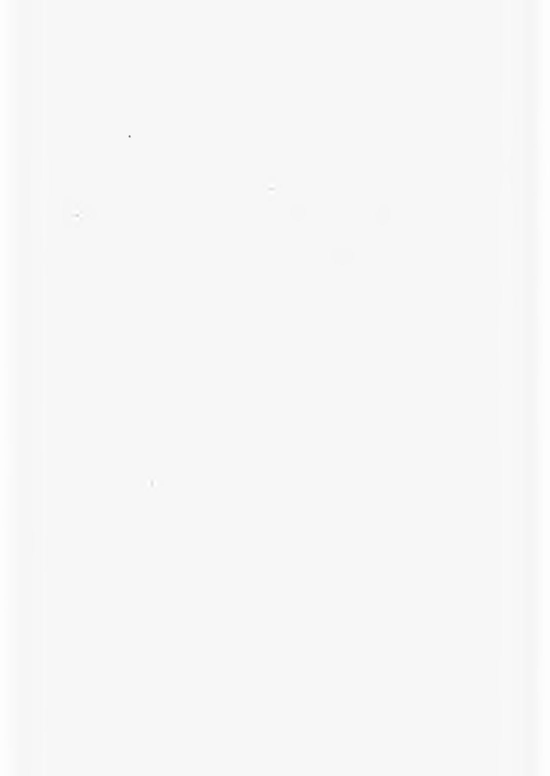
Al-Falah feels indebted to **sheikh Muhammad Nur Suwayd** for giving her the chance to present an abridged translation of his valuable work *Manhaj At-Tarbiyah An-Nabawiyyah Lit-Tifl* [The Prophetic Methodology of Child-Raising] in a serial form under the title *Raising Children in Islam* to our English speaking readers all over the world.

Also, Al-Falah appreciates the efforts made by **Yassir Sabry** in translating this book. Thanks should also be extended to **Sami Ahmad** and **Ahmad M. Hasan** for revising the work. Great appreciation is due to **Reima Shakir** and **Naseema Mall**, our editors, under whose guidance and supervision the subject matter took form.

Finally, all praise and thanks are due to Allah, without Whose Help and Guidance nothing can be accomplished.

General director

Sheikh Muhammad `Abdu



Introduction

The Islamic *`Aqidah* - belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, the Last Day and Divine Predestination whether good or evil - is distinguished by its unseen nature to the extent that a man may be unsure of how to explain this concept to his child. How can a child perceive this idea? How can it be simplified? Parents always ask and get confused with regard to these kinds of questions. Nevertheless, through the way in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with children, we find that there are five essential principles on which the Islamic *`Aqidah* can be implanted in the mind of a child. They are as follows:

The First Principle: Teaching a Child the Verbal Declaration of Faith.

The Second Principle: Implanting Love for, Reliance on, and Fear of Allah.

The Third Principle: Implanting Love for the Prophet, his Household and his Companions.

The Fourth Principle: Teaching a Child the Glorious Qur'an.

The Fifth Principle: Raising the Child on Unswerving Belief.

In his well-known book, *Ihya' `Ulum ad-Din*, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali stressed the importance of raising children according to the Islamic *`Aqidah*. He said, "Know, dear reader, that what we have mentioned regarding the Islamic *`Aqidah* should be taught to a child at an early age so that he would learn it by heart, and later grasp its understandings as he grows. Memorization leads to understanding, and understanding leads to unswerving belief, which a child attains with the Mercy of Allah. It is one of Allah's favors upon man that He expands his heart to belief from a tender age, without the requirement of seeking proof."[1]

Al-Ghazali explained the means of deepening one's belief, by saying, "Argumentation by no means leads to deep-rooted belief. Rather, a child should concern himself with reciting and understanding the Qur'an, reading books of *hadith* and reflecting upon their meanings, and engaging in doing acts of worship. By doing so, his belief will be deeply

1. Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, vol. 1, p. 94.

rooted through what he grasps of the Qur'anic proofs, as well as by what he learns of *hadith*, and what he gains of the light and fruit of worship."

There is no doubt that each child is born on the *Fitrah* (i.e. sound nature; Islam). The Glorious Qur'an affirms this fact in the following verse that reads,

> ﴾ *When your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying), 'Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)?' They said, 'Yea, we do testify (this),' lest you should say on the Day of Judgment, 'Of this we were never mindful.'* ﴿
>
> (Al-A`raf: 172)

This meaning is further portrayed in the *Qudsi Hadith*, in which Allah, Most High, says,

> *"I have created My servants as one having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah but it is Satan who turns them away from their religion and he makes unlawful what has been declared as lawful for them."*[1]

`Ali al-Qari commented on the *hadith*, which reads, *"Each child is born on the Fitrah,"* saying, "In this *hadith*, the word '*Fitrah*' refers to Islam, the

1. Reported by Muslim.

religion of monotheism. This *hadith*, thus, means that if a child's instinct is kept unblemished, he will choose no way other than that of belief (in Islam), for his *Fitrah* is based on (the Islamic) *Shari`ah*, and will not deviate from it to other paths as long as his instinct remains so."

It is also said that it means that each child is born knowing and believing in Allah, Most High. This saying agrees with Abu Hanifah's stance in which he said, "Every sane adult, man or woman, should know Allah depending on his/her own intellect, even if he/she is not aware of the mission of the Messengers of Allah."

If we reflect upon the Qur'anic verses, we will see how the Messengers of Allah (peace be upon them all) cared about the soundness of their children's belief. In this context, the Glorious Qur'an says,

> ﴿*...And this was the legacy that Ibrahim left to his sons, and so did Ya`qub; 'my sons! Allah has chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the state of submission (to Allah).'*﴾
>
> (Al-Baqarah: 132)

In the Qur'an, Luqman (peace be upon him) admonished his son saying,

﴿O my son! If there be (but) the weight of a mustard seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well-acquainted (with them).﴾

(Luqman: 16)

Moreover, it is significant that both *surat* Al-Ikhlas, which presents spiritual belief and *surat* Al-Kafiṛun, which presents practical belief are amongst the short *surah*s of the Glorious Qur'an. Children can easily learn these two *surahs* by heart. The Prophet (peace be upom him) concerned himself with the affairs of children to the extent that he used to call them to embrace Islam. `Ali ibn Abi Talib, for example, embraced Islam when he was no more than ten years old. The Prophet (peace be upon him) called children to Islam in various circumstances, even during his visits.

In this regard, Imam `Abd ar-Raziq reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a Jewish neighbor whose character was upright. This Jewish man had a little boy. Once, that Jewish boy fell ill, and the Prophet (peace be upon him), therefore, paid him a visit along with some of his Companions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed him saying,

"Would you testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah?" The boy looked at his father but his father remained silent, thus the boy accordingly remained silent. This happened on the second time also. However, on the third time, the boy's father told him, "Say what he (the Prophet) asked you to say." The boy obeyed his father and uttered the verbal testimony of faith. Right after that he breathed his last. When the Jews prepared to bury him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"We are more deserving of him than you."* Thereupon, he washed him, shrouded him and offered the funeral Prayer for him. Likewise, the early pious Muslims used to call children to Islam. `Umar ibn al-Khattab, for instance, used not to permit Jews or Christians to make their children follow their religion.(1)

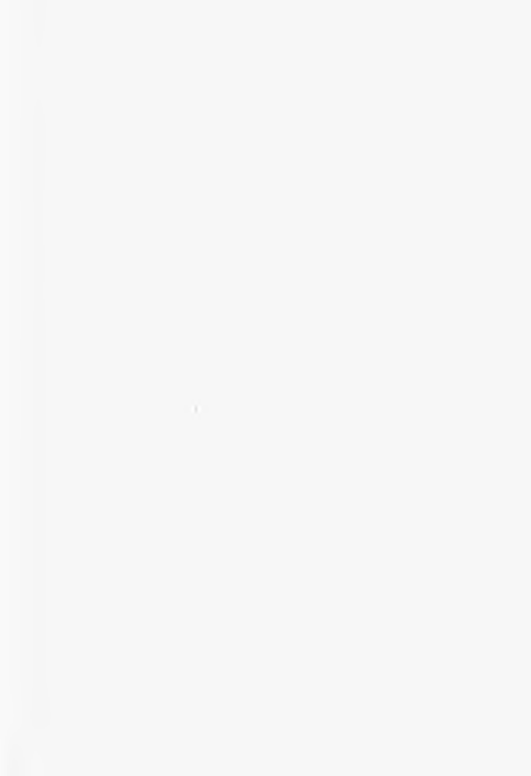
By doing so, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) followed the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be upon him). `Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I witnessed the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) when he concluded a peace treaty with the Christians of Taghlib, on the condition that they should not make their children Christians, and that if they violate this condition, this peace treaty will be nullified."

1. `Abd ar-Raziq, *Musannaf*, vol. 6, p. 48.

Mujahid, likewise, used to call his slave-boy to Islam saying, "O Jarir! Embrace Islam."[1]

All that has been mentioned above is an admonition to the coming generation of leaders and scholars to care about children and not to leave them vulnerable to those who call to polytheism.

1. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 123.



The Principles of Implanting the Creed

- **Teaching a Child the Verbal Declaration of Faith.**
- **Implanting Love for, Reliance on, and Fear of Allah.**
- **Implanting Love for the Prophet, his Household and his Companions.**
- **Teaching a Child the Glorious Qur'an.**
- **Raising the Child on Unswerving Belief.**



The First Principle

Teaching a Child the Verbal Declaration of Faith

Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Make the word 'There is no god but Allah' the first word that your children hear, and on their death, help them say, 'There is no god but Allah'."*

In his book, *Ahkam al-Mawlud*, Ibn al-Qayyim said, "When a child starts to speak, his parents should teach him to say, 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' A child should first hear something related to the knowledge about Allah, Most High; His Oneness, His Sovereignty and His Attributes. Therefore, the best names in the sight of Allah are `Abdullah and `Abd ar-Rahman. Thus, when a child commences to

discern the meanings of things, he will understand that he is a servant of Allah, and that Allah is his Master."

`Abd al-Karim ibn Umayyah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to teach children of Banu Hashim to say, ﴾*And say 'Praise be to Allah, Who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation: yea, magnify Him for His Greatness and Glory.'*﴿ (Al-Isra': 111) seven times once they start to talk.[1]

In this connection, Ibn Zhufr al-Makki narrated, "When Abu Sulayman Dawud ibn Nasir at-Ta'i (may Allah have mercy on him) turned five, his father sent him to an instructor, who started to teach him the Qur'an. The child was keen to memorize what his instructor taught him. When he memorized *surat* Al-Insan by heart, his mother saw him on a Friday, looking at the wall, reflecting and pointing (to something) with his hand. Being worried about him, she called him saying, 'O Dawud! Go out to play with the other boys.' He remained silent and his mother pressed him to her bosom, saying, 'Woe to me!' The child said, 'O mother! Is there anything

1. Imam `Abd ar-Raziq, *Musannaf*, vol. 4, p. 334.

wrong with you?' She replied, 'What are you thinking about?' He responded, 'About the servants of Allah.' She wondered, 'Where are they?' He disclosed, 'In Paradise.' She asked, 'What are they doing there?' He declared, ﴿*... Reclining in the (Garden) on raised thrones, they will see there neither the sun's (excessive heat) nor excessive cold.*﴾[1] He, then, continued reciting the *surah* until he reached the verse that reads, ﴿*... Verily this is a reward for you, and your endeavor is accepted and recognized.*﴾[2] He impressively asked, 'O mother! What was their 'endeavor'?' As she was unable to answer him, he said to her, 'Please, leave me alone to enjoy their company for an hour.' His mother informed his father about the issue. Thus, his father answered his question saying, 'Their 'endeavor' was that they said: There is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Therefore, the child continued to recite this statement most of the time."[3]

On receiving the mission, the Prophet (peace be upon him) called `Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) to Islam although `Ali was not more than ten years old. On his part, `Ali (may Allah

1. This is a quotation from the Qur'an, *Surat* Al-Insan: 13.

2. *Surat* Al-Insan: 22.

3. Ibn Zufr al-Makki, *Anbu' Nujuba' Al-Abna'*, p. 160.

be pleased with him) believed in his mission and secretly accompanied him to the outskirts of Makkah to perform Prayer, away from his parents and family. When the child's father, Abu Talib, saw his son perform the prayer with the Messenger of Allah, he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "O my nephew! What is that religion you are calling to?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) answered him, *"O uncle! This is the religion of Allah, His angels, and His Messengers. It is the religion of our forefather Ibrahim. Allah has sent me as a Messenger to all people. You are more deserving of my call than the others, and so you are to believe in it and help me in this regard."*[1]

Zayd ibn Harithah, who was brought from Syria as a prisoner of war by Khadijah's uncle Hakim ibn Huzam, was the first slave to embrace Islam. The Mother of the Believers, Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) chose Zayd to be her slave-boy, and later, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked his wife, Khadijah, to give him Zayd. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) set him free, and adopted and educated him.[2]

1. Ibn As-Salah, *Muqaddimah*, p. 160.
2. `Abd as-Salam Hashim Hafiz, *Sirat Nabi Al-Huda War-Rahmah*, Islamic World League, Makkah, p. 81.

That was the way in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) founded his newly-born Islamic State, focusing his attention on children. He concerned himself with them, cared about them and called them to Islam. `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) played a vital role on the occasion of the Prophet's *Hijrah* to Madinah, when he slept in the house of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). That was the Prophetic methodology in raising children to be the leaders of the future and the founders of the newly-born Islamic community.

The Second Principle

Implanting Love for, Reliance on, and Fear of Allah

Each child has his own strength, weaknesses and problems, whether psychological, social, economic, or educational. These problems vary regarding their difficulty or ease, and children may disclose these problems consciously or unconsciously. Now the question is: how can a child solve his problems?

This, in fact, can be achieved through implanting love for, reliance on, and fear of Allah in the mind of a child. In addition to this, belief in Divine Predestination should be ingrained in his mind. In this way, the child will be able to face his life in the stages of childhood as well as in the future stages with fortitude and wisdom. Below are some proofs of this point.

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to me,

> *'Do not raise a stick over your family, and make them fear Allah, the Most High.'"*[1]

At-Tirmidhi reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "One day I was (riding) behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he said,

> *"Young boy, I shall teach you some words (of advice): Be mindful of Allah, and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah; if you seek help, seek help of Allah (alone). Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you, they would benefit you only with something that Allah had already prescribed for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you only with something Allah had already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."*[2]

1. Reported by at-Tabarani in *al-Awsat*.
2. Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

In a version other than that of at-Tirmidhi, it reads, *"Be mindful of Allah, you will find Him before you. Get to know Allah in prosperity and He will know you in adversity. Know that what has passed you by was not going to befall you and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and ease with hardship."*

When the child learns the above *hadith* by heart and understands it, nothing will hinder him from going in the right way through the different phases of his life. Is there any other methodology of education that could bring up children on the like of these morals!

This *hadith* has a wonderful power in solving the problems of a child due to its influence and spirituality. The child continues to develop and grow by virtue of the fear of Allah that has been implanted in his heart, as well as his belief in Divine Predestination. Children of the Companions of the Prophet were raised on this Prophetic guidance and consequently learnt to rely upon Allah, Most High, while facing life's troubles. They sought the help of Allah in times of adversity, and believed that there is no might nor power except with Allah. They knew

that relief comes with sorrow, and that difficulty will be followed by ease.

In his book *Jami` al-`Ulum wa al-Hikam*, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali reported that Malik al-Ashja`i came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "My son, `Awf, was taken as a prisoner of war." He replied, "*Send him someone to tell him that the Prophet (peace be upon him) orders him to say frequently, 'There is no might nor power except with Allah.'*" Having received the Prophet's command, `Awf engaged in saying, 'There is no might nor power except with Allah'. Although he was heavily chained, the chains became released from him. He went out to the place where he faced a camel belonging to the enemies and he mounted it. On his way, he saw the enemies' camels, and as he cried out, all the camels followed him. His parents were greatly surprised when they heard him calling for them. His father said, "By the Lord of the *Ka`bah*! He is `Awf." His mother said, "Woe! `Awf has undergone great pain because of the heavy chains." Both his father and their servant hastened to him, where they saw that `Awf had filled the courtyard of the house with camels. `Awf told his father the story and the latter went to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in order to inform him of the matter. Having heard the news of `Awf, the

Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, *"You are permitted to do what you wish regarding the camels."* Then, the following Qur'anic verses were revealed,

> ﴿*And for this who fears Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, and He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if any one puts his trust in Allah, Sufficient is (Allah) for him.*﴾
>
> (At-Talaq: 2-3)

Sahl ibn Sa`d narrated that an *Ansari* boy was extremely influenced by the fear of the Hell-fire, to the extent that he used to burst into tears when anyone mentioned it. He also used to confine himself in his house. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was informed of the boy's affair and so he paid him a visit. On seeing the Prophet (peace be upon him), the boy embraced him and died soon after that. The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded his Companions to prepare the dead boy for the funeral.[1]

Following is an example of the early righteous Muslims' care concerning the issue of implanting unswerving belief in Allah in their children's minds, by means of belief in Divine Predestination whether it seems to be good or bad:

1. Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, vol. 3, p. 494.

Al-Walid ibn `Ubadah said, "I went to my father, `Ubadah, while he was overcome with illness to the extent that I believed he would die on the spot. I asked him, 'Admonish me, father! And try to do your best in this regard.' He said, 'Help me to sit.' On sitting, he said, 'Son! You will not taste the joys of belief or attain true knowledge of Allah except when you believe in Divine Predestination, whether it is good or bad.' I asked, 'Father! How can I discriminate between good and bad predestination?' He said, 'Get yourself well-acquainted with the fact that what has passed you by was not going to befall you and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. Son! I have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, *'The first thing Allah created was the Pen. He then said to it, 'Write.' Then, the Pen wrote what will take place until the Day of Judgment.* Son! If you die without believing in this, you will enter the Hell-fire.'"[1]

Practical examples of the early righteous Muslims

The Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn al-Khattab, walked along the street while some

1. Reported by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi.

children were playing with each other. Upon seeing him coming, the children, save one called `Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr, fled from him. Wondering about this boy, `Umar asked him about why he had not fled from him. The child declared, "I am neither guilty nor in fear of you, so I did not escape nor leave the place for you."[1]

While traveling, Ibn `Umar saw a little boy tending a flock of sheep. "Would you sell me one of them?" Ibn `Umar asked. "But I am not the actual owner of them," answered the boy. Ibn `Umar again asked, "What if you pretend that a wolf ate it?" The slave boy replied impressively, "Is not Allah watching me!" Ibn `Umar, thereupon, kept this statement in mind and uttered it repeatedly for a time.

It happened that a scholar was used to giving one of his students special attention. Some accused him and asked about the reason. He answered them practically. He gave each of his students a bird and ordered them to slay it with the condition that none could see him. All the students slew their bird except for the one to whom he paid special attention. The scholar asked him the reason for not slaying the bird, and upon this the student answered, "I found no

1. Ibn al-`Adim, *Tazkirat Al-'Aba' Wa Tasliyat Al-Abna'*, p. 66.

place in which I could be alone". Commenting on these indicative words the scholar said, "That is why I shower him with love and attention more than the others."[1] Meaning that the student realized that there was no place where Allah, the Almighty, could not see him.

In his book, *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali narrated a very interesting story: "Sahl ibn `Abdullah at-Tasturi said, 'When I was three years old, I woke up at night, and there I found my uncle Muhammad ibn Siwar performing the night prayer. Once he asked me, 'Why don't you remember Allah, Who has created you?' I asked, 'How can I do so?' 'To say these words three times without uttering them with your tongue - Allah supports me, Allah sees me, and Allah keeps a watchful eye on me.' I kept repeating them for some days, then I informed him so. Thereupon, he said, 'Do the same thing seven times every night.' So I did, then I told him. 'Do the same thing eleven times every night,' he said. I said them and enjoyed their sweetness. After one year, my uncle said to me, 'Memorize and adhere to what I have taught you, as this brings you great reward in this world and in the

1. *Ar-Risalah Al-Qushayriyyah*, p. 147.

Hereafter'. I kept on acting in accordance with his advice for many years until he said to me, 'Whomever Allah supports, sees and keeps a watchful eye on him, could not commit even the slightest sin, could he?' Then he added, 'Be mindful of committing a sin.' When I reached the age of six or seven, I finished learning and memorizing the Qur'an by heart. I observed fasting frequently and made barley bread, my diet for twelve years."

In his book, *Anba' Nujaba' al-Abna'*, Ibn Zufar al-Makki narrated, "One day, during his childhood, al-Harith al-Muhasibi passed by some boys who were playing and he looked at them. The owner of the house, beside the place where they were playing, offered some dates to al-Muhasibi. In his answer to al-Muhasibi's query about the source of the dates the man said, 'They fell from a man, from whom I had already bought some.' 'Do you know him?' asked al-Muhasibi. 'Yes,' was the man's answer. Al-Muhasibi looked at the boys who were playing and asked them, 'Is this man a Muslim?' 'Yes,' they replied. When he heard this, Al-Muhasibi left the man and walked away but the man followed him and asked why he had behaved this way to him. Al-Muhasibi turned to him and said, 'O venerable man! As long as you are a Muslim, you should do

your best to find the owner of the dates and return them to him. How could you offer ill-gotten property for Muslim children to eat? Shame on you!' The man replied, 'By Allah, I will never make this world my target.'"

In the same book, Ibn Zufar said, "When Abu al-Husayn Ahmad ibn Muhammad memorized the Qur'an, he was obliged to study it in the shop where he worked. Every morning he would leave the shop to go and learn more about the Qur'an and for this reason his father threatened him and sometimes beat him. One day his father asked him, 'Would you gain anything from what you are learning?' The young boy replied, 'To know Allah and make me close to Him is the fruit which I desire.' The father asked, 'How could you know Him?' The child declared, 'When I consider what He prescribed and what he forbade, then I become acquainted with Him.' Again the father asked, 'But how could you bring yourself closer to Him?' The child replied, 'By acting in accordance with what He has taught me.' Thereupon the father said, 'By Allah, I will never hinder you.'"

The Third Principle

Implanting Love for the Prophet, his Household and his Companions

This principle includes the second part of the testification of faith. So, the early righteous Muslims did their best to implant it in their children's hearts and minds. Implanting such love, undoubtedly, thrills the noble feelings of a child, encourages good habits in him, represents the outlet for his problems and relieves his catastrophes.

In its first stages, the human soul is keen to emulate the most impressive and noble person to be its example, imitating all that he does. According to the Islamic methodology of raising children, the blessed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is the best example on whom we must model ourselves.

Verily, whenever that good example is set aside, ruin, psychological and nervous diseases arrive in its wake. Reflecting on the state of some people proves

this fact. Many youths have no aim in life; they blindly follow fashion, emulate morally deviated actors and run after the so-called new age thinkers, who receive their thoughts and ideas from Satan.

It was narrated on the authority of Anas that a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the Hour (i.e. Day of Judgment) saying, "When will the Hour be?" The Prophet said, *"What have you prepared for it?"* The man said, "Nothing, except that I love Allah and His Messenger." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"You will be with those whom you love."* Anas said, "We had never been so glad as we were when hearing that saying of the Prophet (i.e., 'You will be with those whom you love.') Therefore, I love the Prophet, Abu Bakr and `Umar, and I hope that I will be with them because of my love for them even though my deeds are not similar to theirs."

What can be done to strengthen the love of the Prophet in a child's soul?

As we reflect on the way the children of the Companions loved the Prophet (peace be upon him), we can note the following characteristics of these children.

They responded quickly and obediently to his call and orders. The more quickly one responds, the more lovable he will be. This is an obvious sign of love. `Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah grant him peace) highlighted this point clearly. He answered the Prophet when he was called to embrace Islam regardless of the people's opinions. It is a matter of belief and everyone is responsible for oneself only. At the age of eight, he showed bravery when his father saw him performing prayer secretly along with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his wife, Khadijah.

We find that he was a wonderful example for being humble and immediate to respond to the Prophet's orders. He served the Prophet (peace be upon him) for ten years. During this period he abandoned the entertainment that other people of his age would have desired. He did so to respond to the Prophet's commands. In this regard, Anas reported, "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) came to me as I was playing with some playmates. He greeted me and sent me on an errand ..."

They proved a higher status in this connection; as they met the Prophet's needs even before being asked to do so. This estimates to nothing except the

permanent value of love. Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) "The Prophet (peace be upon him) once entered the bathroom, then I prepared water for ablution for him. Thereupon, he asked, *"Who brought this (water)?"* As he was informed (who had done this), he prayed for me saying, *"O Allah! Make him (i.e. Ibn `Abbas) understand religion thoroughly."*

The children pledged allegiance to the Prophet

`Urwah ibn az-Zubayr and Fatimah, the daughter of al-Mundhir ibn az-Zubayr, reported that Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr, was at the time of the emigration pregnant with `Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr. She came to Quba' and gave birth to `Abdullah there and then sent him to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) so that he would rub his palate with chewed dates. Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) took hold of the baby and placed him on his lap and then called for dates. `A'ishah said, "It was a while before we were able to find any. He (the Prophet) chewed them and then put his saliva in his mouth. The first thing that entered his stomach, was the saliva of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him).

Asma' said, "He then rubbed and blessed him and gave him the name of `Abdullah." He (`Abdullah) went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he had attained the age of seven or eight years, in order to pledge allegiance to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as az-Zubayr, his father, had commanded him to do. Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) smiled when he saw him coming towards him and then accepted his allegiance."

The children defend the Prophet

`Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf narrated: "While I was standing in a row among the warriors, on the day of the battle of Badr, I saw on my right two young *Ansari* boys. I wished I had been between some stronger men. One of them called my attention saying, "O Uncle! Do you know Abu Jahl?" I said, "Yes. What do you want from him, O my nephew?" He said, "I have been informed that he abuses Allah's Messenger. By Him in Whose Hands my life is, if I see him, then my body will not leave his body until either of us meet his fate." I was astonished to hear him speak. Then the other boy called my attention saying the same as his friend. After a while I saw Abu Jahl walking amongst some people. I said

(to the boys), "Look! This is the man you asked me about." So, both of them attacked him with their swords and struck him to death then returned to Allah's Prophet to inform him of what had happened. Allah's Prophet asked, *"Which of you killed him?"* Each of them said, "I killed him." Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, *"Have you cleaned your swords?"* They said, "No." He then looked at their swords and said, *"No doubt, you have both killed him."*[1]

When those children at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not defend him with weapons, they spared no time to defend him by delivering news that contained important information.

Declaring the reason behind the revelation of the verse, ﴿*... Surely the more honorable (element) will expel therefrom the meaner ...*﴾ (Al-Munafiqun: 8) Ibn Sa`d and Ibn Ishaq said, "While the Prophet was near a watering place, a group came down to it. `Umar had a hired servant from Banu Ghifar called Jahjah ibn Mas`ud, who was driving his horse. Jahjah and Sinan ibn Waber al-Juhani were engaged in a fight. Then, Juhani cried out, "O *Ansar*" while

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

the other yelled "O *Muhajirun*". `Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul was enraged. He was among some of his people including a young boy called Zayd ibn Arqam. He said, "As they have actually done this, they are disputing about our precedence and how they outnumber us in our own country. By Allah, the old saying describes the vagabonds of Quraysh as the old saying goes: Feed your dog and it will eat you. By Allah! On our return to Madinah, indeed the more honorable will expel the meaner." Then addressing his people, who were there, he said, "This is what you have done to yourselves. You have left them to occupy your country, and you have divided your possessions among them. If you had held your property back from them, they would have gone elsewhere." Zayd ibn Arqam heard and conveyed that to the Prophet (peace be upon him) after he had finished with his enemies."

Children love what the Prophet loves

Anas ibn Malik narrated, "I went along with the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the house of a young tailor. The tailor presented a bowl of porridge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and resumed his work. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started picking the pieces of gourd and I, too, started picking them and

putting it before him. Since then I have always loved (to eat) gourd.[1]

The children of the companions learned the *hadiths* of the Prophet by heart

Mahmud ibn ar-Rabi` said, "When I was a boy of five, I remember the Prophet (peace be upon him) took water from a bucket (used for getting water out of a well) with his mouth and threw it on my face.[2]

Abu al-Hawra' as-Sa`di Rabi`ah ibn Shayban said, "Once I asked al-Hasan ibn `Ali (may Allah be pleased with both of them), 'What have you memorized from the Prophet (peace be upon him)?'" He answered, "I learned, 'Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt; for saying the truth is peacefulness while lying is doubt.'"[3]

Samarah ibn Jundub said, "When I was young, in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), I used to commit to memory what he said. I had, thereupon, the ability to deliver his *hadiths* but as there were elder men present at the same time as I, I could not."[4]

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.
2. Reported by al-Bukhari.
3. Reported by at-Tirmidhi.
4. Agreed upon.

The children and their reward

The children were frequently rewarded for learning and memorizing prophetic *hadiths*. In his book, *Sharaf As-hab al-Hadith*, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi quoted Ibrahim ibn Ad-ham as saying, "My father said to me, 'O my son! Try to obtain *hadith*. Whenever you hear a *hadith* and learn it by heart, you will get one dirham as a reward.' Thereupon, I have sought *hadith*."

The children and their service to the scholars

It was narrated in "*Al-Muhaddith al-Fasil*" that Sufyan ibn `Uyaynah said,

"My father was a skilful money changer in Kufah. As he was overwhelmed by debt, we moved to Makkah. We returned to the mosque to perform *az-Zuhr* prayer (the Noon prayer). I was standing at the door of the mosque when an elderly man came and asked me to take care of his donkey so that he could perform the prayer. On answering his demand, I said, 'Never will I do so unless you tell me some of the Prophet's *hadiths* (peace be upon him).' 'But what would you do with such *hadiths*?' he asked, considering me too young to learn *hadith*. Yielding

to my insistent request, he told me eight *hadiths*. As a result, I took care of his donkey and did my best to memorize these *hadiths* by repeating them frequently until he finished his prayer. When he came back, he asked me if I had gained anything from what he had told me before. So, I mentioned them all to him. Thereupon, he said to me, 'May Allah bless you. You may come to me tomorrow and attend my lectures.' I learnt afterwards that he was `Amr ibn Dinar, the famous scholar of *Hadith*."

The children's effort and emigration to seek *Hadith*

While relating his travels to learn *Hadith*, `Ali ibn `Asim said, "Both Hashim and I were going to travel from (a town or village called) Wasit to Kufah so as to meet (a well-known scholar called) Mansur. A short distance from Wasit, someone met me. I could not determine if he was Mu`awiyah or someone else. I asked him, 'Where are you going?' 'I am in debt and I am trying to find a way to pay it,' he answered. Upon this I said, 'Come back with me and I will give you some money.' He accepted my offer so I gave him two thousand dirhams. Being late, I reached Kufah in the evening while Hashim

had reached it at noon and had learned forty *hadith*s from Mansur. The next day, I went to Mansur's house and there I found a funeral taking place. When I learnt that it was Mansur, I burst into tears. 'O little boy! What is wrong with you?' an elderly man asked me. 'I came here so that I could learn from this venerable scholar (i.e. Mansur) but now he has passed away,' I replied. He said, 'Would you not like to know another one more learned?' I answered in the affirmative, and he said to me, 'Write down so and so.' After a month I asked him saying 'Who are you, may Allah have mercy upon you?' He looked astonished and asked, 'Do you still not know who I am inspite of the long period you spent learninig from me?' Then, he added, 'I am Husayn ibn `Abd ar-Rahman...'"

It is something to be considered carefully that this little boy sacrificed his time, parted with his motherland, and paid half of his money to meet Mansur, a scholar from whom he would learn *Hadith*, but unfortunately he was too late to meet him. Knowing his sincere intention to seek knowledge, and faithful love of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah bestowed on him the most outstanding scholar of his time, Husayn ibn `Abd ar-Rahman.

Writing the Prophetic *hadiths* and verifying their authenticity

Both scholars and parents adopted an authentic and scientific methodology to model children on. They made them write down the *hadith*s and then contrast them with the original source. Verily, this great methodology indicates how careful the scholars and parents were in paying homage to our rich legacy.

Hisham ibn `Urwah said, "My father once asked me, 'Have you written down (i.e. the *hadith*s)?' 'Yes,' I answered. 'Have you compared them with the original source?,' he repeated. I said, 'No'. Upon this, he said, 'Then, you have written nothing, i.e. you have learned none.'"[1]

Girls memorize *hadiths*

Az-Zubaydi narrated, "Malik ibn Anas used to teach his students in his house. His daughter, who learned his book *Al-Muwatta'* by heart, used to stand behind the door, and correct any student who gave the wrong answer, before Malik himself recognized the mistake."[2]

1. Reported by Ibn Abu Shaybah in his *Musannaf*, vol. 9, p. 111.
2. Ibn Farhun al-Maliki, *Ad-Dibaj Al-Mudhahhab Fi Ma`rifat A`yan `Ulama' Al-Madh-hab*, verified by Dr. Mahmud al-Ahmadi.

The children's interest in *Hadith* and its sciences

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi narrated, "Once the Mother of the Believers, `A'ishah, said to her nephew, `Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, 'It has come to my knowledge that you write down the *hadith*s you learn from me and rewrite them afterwards. Why do you do that?' He replied saying, 'I hear from you the same *hadith* related in different ways.' 'Have you found any difference between them and their meaning?' she asked. 'No,' he replied. She declared, 'Well, there is no objection to it.'"[1]

The prophet's biography (*Sirah*) and its influence

Knowing that the *Sirah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is of great influence upon their children, the early righteous Muslims were keen to teach it to them. The Prophet's *Sirah* (i.e. biography) represents the interpretive source of the Qur'an, by which, feelings are thrilled, the spirit is greatly impressed, and Islamic history is clearly portrayed. The *Sirah* of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) brings people to the right way and the enlightening life of Islam.

1. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Al-Kifayah Fi `Ilm Ar-Riwayah*, p. 205.

Isma`il ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) said, "My father used to teach us the biography of the Prophet's battles, and he used to say to us 'O my sons! Sustain the biography of the Prophet's battles for they bear the honor of your fathers.'"[1]

Zayn al-`Abidin ibn al-Husayn ibn `Ali said, "We used to teach our children the biography of the Prophet's Battles as well as the *surah* of the Qur'an."[2]

A mother seeks blessings for her children in a special way

Anas ibn Malik reported that Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) used to come to the house of Umm Sulaym and sleep in her bed while she was away from her house. One day, while he was sleeping in her bed she returned and it was said to her, 'It is Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) who is having a nap in your house, lying on your bed. She came and found him sweating and his sweat was falling on the leather cloth, which was spread on her bed. She opened her scent-bag and began to fill the

1. Muhammad Rida, *Muhammad Rasul Allah* , p. 151.
2. *Ibid.*

bottles with the sweat. Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) was startled. He woke up and said, *"Umm Sulaym, what are you doing?"* She said, "Allah's Messenger, we seek blessings for our children through it." Thereupon, he said, *"You have done something right."* [1]

Along with such sincere love of the Prophet and her faithful intention to follow in his footsteps, this pious mother dealt with the situation to bless her children with the sweat of the Prophet. Moreover, the Prophet himself agreed with her, saying, *"You have done something right."*

1. Reported by Muslim.

The Fourth Principle

Teaching a Child the Glorious Qur'an

Teaching the Qur'an should be the first seed to be implanted into a child by his guardian. Thereupon a child, will come to believe in Allah as his Lord and the Qur'an as His word. The Qur'an will fully penetrate the child: reviving his spirit and his heart while at the same time its light would guide his feelings and thoughts. Having done this, the child will become attached to the Qur'an; acting upon its commands, avoiding evil and practicing its morals in his life.

As-Suyuti said, "Teaching the Qur'an to children is one of the principles of Islam through which they would be brought up to abide by the *fitrah.* Their hearts would shine with wisdom before being ruined by committing evil."

Importance of teaching the Qur'an

At-Tabarani and Ibn an-Najjar narrated on the authority of `Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"Raise your children to do three things: to love your Prophet, to love his household and to recite the Qur'an. Verily, those who commit the Qur'an to memory would be protected by Allah's Shade along with His Messengers and beloved ones when there will be no shade but the Shade of Allah."*

Ibn `Asakir mentioned on the authority of Abu Zabyah that `Uthman ibn `Affan paid `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud a visit when the latter was ill and on his deathbed. `Uthman asked him, "What do you suffer from?" `Abdullah said, "My sins." Again,`Uthman asked, "What do you aspire for?" "The Mercy of my Lord," `Abdullah answered. "Shall I bring you a doctor?" `Uthman suggested. `Abdullah said, "No, he is the cause of my illness." "Shall I give you a gift (i.e. money)?" `Uthman asked. "I do not need it," answered `Abdullah. `Uthman said, "It will help your daughters after you pass away." Upon this, `Abdullah asked, "Do you fear poverty will affect them? I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying, '*Whoever reads surat al-Waqi`ah will never suffer from poverty.*'"

The Companions used to tell the Prophet (peace be upon him) of their children's behavior regarding the Qur'an so that they would know how to benefit them. In this regard, Ahmad transmitted on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Amr that once a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him, "Messenger of Allah, my son reads the Qur'an during the daytime and sleeps at night." The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered him saying, *"What is wrong with that, as your son spends his day remembering Allah and then spends his night sleeping peacefully?"*

The Companions were also keen on teaching the Qur'an to people and bringing up their children to love its recitation. It was mentioned in Ibn Kathir's interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an that Ibn `Abbas said to a man, "Shall I tell you a *hadith* that would make you very happy?" The man said, "Yes." Ibn `Abbas said, "Read *surat al-Mulk* and teach it to your household, your sons, and your neighbors; it is the savior and the defender on the Day of Resurrection. There it will defend whomever used to recite it in this worldly life, and will ask Allah to save him from the agony of the grave. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, '*I wish every person of my nation would memorize it.*'"

The Companions were also keen on strengthening the relation between their children and the Qur'an. They used to gather them whenever they completed reciting the Qur'an. At-Tabrani reported on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the latter used to gather his household and his children when finishing reciting the Qur'an to make *du`a'* for them."

It is worth mentioning that a child, when reciting the Qur'an, may prevent an affliction from being afflicted upon his family and upon his society. It was mentioned in some Prophetic sayings that Allah may terminate an affliction, which had been determined for a certain people, as soon as He hears a child reciting a verse of the Qur'an among them.

The child and the simple meaning of the Qur'an

Parents should help a child to understand in a simple way the verses he reads, so that he can respond to the Qur'an with both heart and mind. He may be young but they should persevere. Neither the age nor the stage of a child should become a hindrance; the following narration may affirm this point: Al-Hakim transmitted on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the latter said, "If you want to inquire

about *surat an-Nisa'* you can freely ask me; I studied it when I was very young."

Abu Ya`la reported in his *Musnad* (2/63) on the authority of Mus`ab ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with them both) who said, "I said to my father, 'O my father, tell me about the verse that reads, ﴿*Woe to those who pray but are heedless to their prayer.*﴾ (Al-Ma`un: 6) as we are all heedless to our prayer and cannot concentrate completely while performing it.' His father said, 'This is not the actual meaning of the verses, they rather refer to those who do not perform it on time.'"

The Qur'an and its influence

The Qur'an in general influences the human soul greatly and thrills the noble feelings of man. The Qur'an reaches its peak of influence in a child's soul because the more pure the soul is, the more impressive the influence will be. The *surah*s of the Makkan era are the most suitable for a child's capability in memorizing the Qur'an as they are short and effective in style.

Mustafa Sadiq ar-Rafi`i, the well-known author, explained this point in more details saying, "The short *surah*s of the Qur'an contain great wisdom that

represents Divine evidence. They were not revealed successively as they have been arranged in their present form that you observe in the *Mus-haf.* For example, the verse that reads, ﴿*Say, I seek refuge with the Lord and the Cherisher of mankind.*﴾ (An-Nas: 1); this verse was neither the first nor the last to be revealed. Moreover, these *surahs* present no more than one *Juz'* (part) out of thirty of the whole Qur'an. Allah (Exalted be He) has prepared certain reasons, which make the Qur'an easily recited and permanently memorized. The most effective and useful reason is the nature of these short *surahs*, which are few in words and short in length having the same final word in most verses. They present every verse separately, as an independent *surah* that consists of a few words. Such *surahs* have characteristics that make them easy to be memorized by a child; Their shortness suits the child's ability to control his breath, and the resemblance of the final word composes an interesting rhyme that aids in memorization. Soon after that he will be able to recite the whole Qur'an and receive its influence in his soul. The more he proceeds with the Qur'an, the easier it will be. In this connection, Allah, the Almighty, says,

﴿*We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.*﴾

(Al-Isra': 82)

The best example may be found in *surat* an-Nas, which is the first *surah* to be learned by a child. Considering the *surah*, you find that each verse has the same word at the end. Also, you find that it is so short that it suits the ability of a child at this stage. How compatible this *surah* is in all aspects; lettering, composition, and meaning. Moreover, we may turn to Ibn `Abbas who related to us a living example of the influence of the Qur'an on a child when listening to it. Ibn `Abbas said, "When Allah revealed the verse reading, ﴿*O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from fire.*﴾ (At-Tahrim: 6), the Messenger of Allah recited it to his Companions. Upon hearing this verse a young boy fell down from fear, but he was still alive when the Prophet (peace be upon him) put his hand on the boy's chest. There, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *'O boy, testify that there is no god but Allah,'* thus the young child did so and the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him glad tidings that he will enter Paradise. The Companions wondered saying, 'O Messenger of

Allah, is it only for him?' "Did you not listen to Allah's saying, ﴿*This is for such as fear the time when they shall stand before My tribunal, such as fear My punishment.*﴾ (Ibrahim: 14)"[1]

The Qur'an confers all that is good to a child especially when being recited and when the child is attached to it with a sense of sound understanding. In this case, his memory would be expanded to give service to him when necessary and enable him to cope with his psychological problems and belief-oriented matters.

Living examples of memorizing the Qur'an

These examples may encourage parents to be insistent in teaching the Qur'an to their children:[2]

a. Ash-Shafi`i (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "I committed the Qur'an to memory when I was seven, and memorized the *Muwatta'* when I was ten."[3]

1. Reported by al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 351.
2. For more information you may refer to Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Ihdaa' Fi At-Taswir Al-Fanni Fi Al-Qur'an* and *Mashahid Al-Qiyamah Fi Al-Qur'an* .
3. As-Suyuti, *Tabaqat Al-Huffaz* , p. 145.

b. Reaching the age of ten, Ibn Sina mastered the memorization of the Noble Qur'an.[1]

c. Telling the story of Imam an-Nawawi, ash-shaykh Yasin ibn Yusuf al-Murakishi said, "I observed the Imam, i.e. Imam an-Nawawi, in the city of Nawa when he was at the age of ten, while his fellows were trying to make him play with them. He was suffering from this to the extent that he shed tears but still recited the Qur'an. I loved him then and there. And, even though he worked in his father's shop, he never left reciting the Qur'an. As a result, I met his teacher and recommended him saying, "This boy may be the most learned, ascetic and helpful man of his age." The teacher inquired, "Are you an astrologer?" "No, but it is Allah Who has inspired it to me," I answered. Soon after that, the teacher mentioned it to an-Nawawi's father, who took care of his child until he completed memorizing the whole Qur'an by the time he reached maturity."[2]

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1. Ibn Khillikan, *Wafayat Al-`Ayan, Safahat Min Sabr al-`Ulam'*, vol. 1, p. 152.
2. Ibn as-Subki, *Tabaqat Al-Qurra'* , vol. 8, p. 396.

The suitable age to memorize the Qur'an

Abu `Asim said, "I took my son of three years or less to Ibn Juryaj so as to teach him the Qur'an and *Hadith*." And, he added, "It may be useful to teach a child the Qur'an and *Hadith* at this age."(1)

The teacher and the student would both be rewarded

It happened that when Hammad ibn Abu Hanifah memorized *surat* al-Fatihah perfectly, Abu Hanifah rewarded the teacher with an amount of five hundred dirhams. He, the teacher, wondered and considered it much more than he deserved as he had taught him none but one *surah*. Upon this, Abu Hanifah said to him, "Do not diminish your work, and verily if we had had more money, we would have given you more because of your glorifying of the Qur'an."(2)

"Once Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi, the fighter and leader, (may Allah have mercy on him) passed by a child who was reciting the Qur'an. The child's recitation was so sound and sweet that the great leader stopped to listen to him amidst the very tumult of war. Soon after that Salah ad-Din brought

1. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Al-Kifayah Fi `Ilm Ar-Riwayah* .

2. *Fat-h Bab Al-`Inayah* , p. 19.

the child closer to him and shared his own food with him. Moreover, he devoted a part of his farm to him along with his father."[1]

The Qur'anic schools throughout the Islamic countries

a. The Muslim children turn to the Qur'anic schools

It is narrated that once the children who were learning the Qur'an were so great in number that they found no additional places within the mosques to learn therein since they were about three thousand children. As a result, their teacher, ad-Dahhak ibn Muzahim, who used to teach them for free, was obliged to ride his donkey to supervise them.

b. The Qur'an and the other branches of knowledge

May a child learn a branch of Knowledge in addition to the Qur'an? Answering this question, Ibn Khaldun gave the opinion that Islamic countries discoursed differently in this matter. Some adopt a methodology through which they

1. *An-Nawadir As-Sultaniyyah* , p. 9.

teach nothing but the Qur'an, which is the case of Morocco, while some others teach their children the Hadith in addition to the Qur'an and its related sciences, and those are the Muslims of Africa. Teaching the Qur'an along with the other sciences of language such as poetry, syntax and morphology, as well as the art of writing, is the method adopted by the Muslims of Andalusia.

In our present time, it may be better to merge different branches of science along with teaching the Qur'an instead of studying nothing but religious sciences. When studying religious sciences, the Qur'an must be the starting point from which a student moves onto his next steps, and which infuses his soul with spirituality, his mind with intelligence, and his insight with more understanding. As Islam is relevant in all aspects of life, other subjects that children study today, should be put into context with the Qur'an and sunnah as the foundation of all knowledge.

The Fifth Principle

Raising the Child on Unswerving Belief

Sacrifice supports one's belief and faithfulness and promotes the development of righteousness in his heart. A Muslim child of today needs to be raised on unswerving belief and desire to sacrifice for the sake of Allah with main and might. Then, he will be able to face the bitter challenges and schemes that aim at separating him from Allah's religion. He will capture the sweetness of faith that will serve him perfectly when the time comes to devote his soul to Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned many examples of the believing children and how great their sacrifice was. We may shed light on some of them as follows:

The child of the trench

Suhayb reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said,

> *"There lived a king before you and he had a (court) magician. As he (the magician) had grown old, he said to the king: I am now old, so send some young boy to me so that I should teach him magic. He (the king) sent to him a young boy so that he could train him (in magic). On his way (to the magician) he (the young boy) found a monk sitting. The young boy listened to the monk and was impressed by him. It became his habit that on his way to the magician he would meet the monk and stay with him for some time and then come to the magician (late). He (the magician) beat him because of his being late. He complained to the monk about this treatment and the monk said to him: When you feel afraid of the magician, say, 'Members of my family detained me.' And, when you feel afraid of your family, then say, 'The magician detained me.' It so happened that there came a huge beast, which blocked the people's way, and he (the young boy) said, 'I will come to know today whether*

the magician is superior or the monk.' He picked up a stone and said, 'O Allah, if the affair of the monk is dearer to You than the affair of the magician, cause death to this animal so that people could move about freely.' He threw that stone towards it and killed it. People began to move about (on the path freely). He (the young boy) then came to the monk and informed him about the matter. The monk said, 'O my little son, today you are superior to me. Your affair has come to a stage, where I find that you would soon be put to trial, and in case you are put to trial, do not tell anyone about me. The young boy began to treat the blind and those suffering from leprosy. Eventually he began to cure people from (all kinds) of illness. When a companion of the king, who had gone blind heard about him, he came to him with numerous gifts and said, 'If you cure me, all these things I have collected here would be yours.' The young boy said, 'I do not cure anyone myself; it is Allah Who cures and if you affirm faith in Allah, I shall supplicate Allah to cure you.' He affirmed faith in Allah and then Allah cured him. He came to the king and sat by his side as he used

to sit before. The king said to him, 'Who has restored your eyesight?' He said, 'My Lord.' Thereupon, he (the king) said, 'Is there another lord besides me?' He said, 'My Lord and your Lord is Allah.' Thereupon, the king took hold of him and tormented him until he told him about the boy. Thus the young boy was summoned, and the king said to him, 'O boy, it has been conveyed to me that you have become quite proficient in your magic and that you cure the blind and those suffering from leprosy and such things.' He (the boy), thereupon, said, 'I do not cure anyone; it is Allah Who cures.' He (the king) took hold of him and began to torment him. As a result, he spoke about the monk. The monk was thus summoned and it was said to him, 'You! Depart from your religion.' However, he refused to do so. He (the king) ordered that a saw be brought (and when it was done) he placed it in the middle of the monk's head and sawed it in two parts, until each part fell down separately.

Then, the courtier of the king was brought and it was said to him, 'Turn back from your religion.' He refused to do so. Consequently,

he placed the saw in the midst of his head and sawed it into two parts until each part fell down separately. Then, that young boy was brought and it was said to him, 'Turn back from your religion,' but he refused to do so. The king then handed him over to a group of his courtiers. Then he (the king) said to them, 'Take him to such and such mountain; make him climb up that mountain and when you reach its top (ask him to renounce his faith) but if he refuses, then throw him (down the mountain).' Accordingly, they took him and made him climb up the mountain. There the boy said, 'Allah, save me from them in any way You like.' Soon after that the mountain began to quake and they all fell down and the boy came walking to the king. The king asked him, 'What has happened to your companions?' He said, 'Allah has saved me from them.'

He again handed him to some of his courtiers and said, 'Take him and carry him in a small boat, and when you reach the middle of the sea (ask him to renounce his religion), but if he refuses, throw him (into the water).' When they took him, he said, 'O Allah, save me from them

in any way You like.' It was soon after that when the boat turned over and the king's helpers were drowned. Again he came walking to the king. Then the king said to him, 'What has happened to yonr companions?' He said, 'Allah has saved me from them. You cannot kill me until you fulfill whatever I ask you to do.' The king asked, 'What is that?' He said, 'You should gather the people in one place and hang me to the trunk (of a tree). Then, take hold of an arrow from my quiver and say, 'In the name of Allah, the Lord of the boy;' then shoot an arrow. When you do this, you would then kill me.'

So he (the king) called the people in an open place and tied him (the boy) to the trunk of a tree, then he took hold of an arrow from his qniver placing it in the bow and said, 'In the name of Allah, the Lord of the boy,' and shot the arrow. The arrow hit his temple and the boy died instantly. People said, 'We have believed in the Lord of this young boy.' Some went to the king and said, 'Did you know what happened? What you tried to avert has actually been fulfilled. People have believed

(in the Lord of the boy).' He (the king) commanded that ditches be dug at the opening of the roads. When these ditches were dug, fire was lit within them. There, the king said (to his helpers), 'Throw into the fire, whoever refuses to turn back from his religion.'

The people courted death but did not renounce the true religion) until a woman came with her child and she felt hesitant to jump into the fire. The child said to her, 'O Mother, endure (this ordeal); for you follow the Truth.'"[1]

The children of the companions and their willingness to sacrifice

a. Mothers encourage their children to strive in the Cause of Allah

On the authority of ash-Sha`bi, Ibn Abu Shaybah narrated, "On the day of Uhud, it happened that a woman gave her child a sword; as he was incapable of carrying it, she attached it to his forearm with a rope. She brought him to the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, this is my son; let him defend you.' The Prophet (peace

1. Reported by Muslim.

be upon him) then said to him, *'O Little boy! Vigorously attack here, and there.'* The boy was injured and fell down; he was brought to the Prophet (peace be upon him) who addressed him saying, *'O Little boy! Were you afraid?'* 'No,' was the boy's reply."

b. The martyrdom of mothers and children

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported, "Harithah ibn ar-Rabi` was martyred on the Day of Badr while he was still young. His mother came to the Prophet saying, 'O Allah's Messenger! You know the position of Harithah in my heart (i.e. how dear to me he was), so, if he is in Paradise, I will remain patient and wish for Allah's reward, but if he is not there, then you will know what I should do.'

The Prophet replied, *'May Allah be merciful to you! Have you gone mad? (Do you think) there is but one Paradise? There are many Paradises and he is in the highest of all: Paradise of Al-Firdaws.'"*[1]

1. Reported by at-Tabarani.

c. The children use tricks to strive in the Cause of Allah

Ibn Sa`d reported on the authority of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "On the Day of Badr and before the Messenger of Allah reviewed us, I saw my little brother `Umayr ibn Abi Waqqas hiding away. "What is the matter, my brother?" I asked. On answering he said, "Verily, I love to strive in the Cause of Allah and aspire to be rewarded with martyrdom, but I fear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) may consider me too young to fight (so I keep myself out of his sight)."

Ibn S`ad said about `Umayr ibn Abi Waqqas, "He was so little that he could not fix his scabbard himself and I used to help him. On reaching the age of sixteen, `Umayr was rewarded with martyrdom."

d. The children prepare themselves for Jihad

It was transmitted on the authority of Anas that once a young man from the tribe of Aslam said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "I want to fight in the Cause of Allah but I have

nothing to use in fighting." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"Go to such and such a person (to take his equipment) as he prepared his equipment but then took ill."* The young man went to this person and said, to him, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) sends *salam* (greetings) to you and ordered you to give me the equipment that you had prepared." The man said to (his wife), "Give him all the equipment and keep nothing; by Allah if you hid any, Allah would never render it blessed."[1]

e. The children accompany their fathers in Battle

Al-Bukhari transmitted on the authority of `Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (may Allah have mercy on him), "Az-Zubayr had three scars; one of them was on his shoulder. When I was a child I used to insert my fingers in it playfully. He received two of those wounds on the Day of Badr and the other on the Day of al-Yarmuk when the Companions of Allah's Prophet said to az-Zubayr, 'Attack the enemy vigorously and we will attack them with you?' Az-Zubayr replied, 'If I attack them, you will not support

1. Reported by Muslim.

me.'" They said, 'No, we will support you.' So az-Zubayr attacked them (i.e. the Byzantine) and pierced through their lines, and went beyond them but none of his companions was with him. On his return, the enemy struck him two blows on his shoulder. Between these two wounds there was a scar caused by a blow he had received on the Day of (battle of) Badr. `Urwah said, 'On that day, `Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr was also with him and he was ten years old.' Az-Zubayr had carried him on a horse and left him in the care of some men."

The Companions followed this way of raising their children. They infused them with the spirit of *Jihad* so impressively that the children themselves spared no effort in using different tricks that rendered them older than their real age and then they could accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) in *Jihad* and realize martyrdom.

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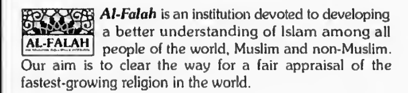
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